

**Elena at Suffolk County Department of Labor
Suffolk County Healthcare Occupational Opportunity for Learning (SCHOOL)**

Elena is a middle-aged woman who entered the social welfare system because her husband abandoned her and abducted her children to his home country of Turkey, forcing her to enter a shelter.

Fighting this illegal abduction and her new-found poverty, Elena was a determined client who was given the opportunity to enter the SCHOOL Project-funded Medical Office Administration program at Hunter Business School. She excelled in her studies and followed through on all her requirements. Elena also worked closely with her Suffolk Works Employment Program (SWEP) counselor to resolve other life issues, including childcare challenges when her children were returned.

Elena completed the vocational program in June 2011 and was selected to participate in the Health Careers Program, a subsidized employment program that gave TANF recipients the opportunity to work and gain experience in a Suffolk County Health Center. She was placed at the Amityville Health Center.

Although this was a temporary program lasting only 16 weeks, when her assignment was over, her health center supervisor referred her to Dominion Health Services, a health employment staffing firm that supplies staff to the health industry. By December, Elena was hired by Dominion and placed back at the Amityville Health Center where she is working 35 hours per week and earning a sustainable wage of \$14 per hour as a medical billing specialist.